

INTERPARENTS

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Mr Michael Ryan
Secretary-General of the European Schools
c/o European Commission
Batiment J II, 30
1049 Brussels

Data protection and Privacy in the Administration of the European Schools

Dear Mr Ryan,

I am writing on behalf of the Parents' Associations of the European Schools, and after consulting the members of Interparents, to draw your attention to our concerns about the collection, storage, processing and circulation of personal data in the administration of the European Schools.

Although the protection of personal data has now been the subject of detailed regulation both at European Community¹ and at national level² for over ten years, several incidents have recently come to our attention which lead to the conclusion that the European Schools' observance of the relevant laws and principles remains unsatisfactory.

Where such shortcomings occur in the treatment of such volumes of electronically archived and processed personal information as the Schools have necessarily to deal with, there are clearly political as well as practical implications. The Parents' Associations naturally assume that it is the intention of the Schools to respect the principles of privacy and data protection and that those exceptions of which we have become aware were unintended. Nevertheless, in view of the complexity and delicacy of this matter, we would urge your Secretariat to issue precise guidelines for the use of all administrative and teaching staff in all the European Schools, and at all levels of responsibility. All bodies of the European School system should undertake to respect such guidelines.

From a practical point of view, and without prejudice to your own legal advice on this matter, the

¹Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

http://europa.eu/eur-lex/en/oj/dat/2001/l_008/l_00820010112en00010022.pdf

² Implementation by the Member States of Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data . Official Journal L 281 , 23/11/1995

guidelines that we have in mind should address the following points:

1. That great care be exercised in respect at least of the following categories of data:
 - names, telephone numbers, postal and e-mail addresses of parents and students
 - the categories of students, and employment information regarding parents
 - family history and family composition
 - medical history and related information
 - disciplinary information
 - financial information, particularly payments of fees and charges, and eventual debts
 - academic performance, other than the published results of public examinations where appropriate.
2. That personal data of students and parents should not be published outside the schools.
3. That inside the Schools, sensitive data should be restricted to only those persons who need to know.
4. That before lists or other documents are made available to administrative boards, the Brussels Central Enrolment Authority, boards of inspectors or the like, the personal data that they may contain be made anonymous.

Naturally, for our part, the Parents' Associations will continue to respect those principles when dealing with personal data whether passed to the Associations by the Schools, or collected by the Associations directly from their members and from other parents, for instance, to administer the transport, extracurricular activities and canteen services, to compile Class Lists and to administer e-mail discussion lists. Guidelines need to be developed for data exchange between the Schools and the respective Parents' Associations.

Should you or your colleagues have any questions or comments about our views on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Rotraut Lüdemann-Moretto
President